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Does Current Joint and Service Doctrine Adequately Address  
the Force Protection Aspects of Rear Area Operations?

By

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in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the  
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The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views  
and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College  
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## **ABSTRACT OF**

### **Does Current Joint and Service Doctrine Adequately Address Rear Area Operations?**

Rear area operations can be divided into two primary functions, supporting the force and protecting the force. This exposition focuses on the failure of current doctrine to adequately address the requirements for rear area operations to produce the conditions necessary for adequate force protection levels. The paper examines joint and service rear area doctrine to determine if it provides a satisfactory solution to future challenges. It provides some alternatives to the current procedures in order to provide the joint force commander the operational control he needs to not only to protect the force but also to better manage and synchronize his warfighting efforts at the operational level.

Critical questions include: does componency help or hinder the JRAC (joint rear area coordinator), should the JRAC be a coordinator or a functional component commander, should air and sea space be included in the JRAC's scope of responsibilities, and should the JRAC come from JFC's (joint force commander) headquarters or can he come from the service component commander's staff?

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## **Adequacy of Current Doctrine**

Many practitioners of operational art believe that Clausewitz is the originator of modern doctrine and that sound joint doctrine is the key ingredient of operational success.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, Hans Rothfels a German historian's candid perspective, that Clausewitz is an author "more quoted than actually read,"<sup>2</sup> also applies equally to the use of doctrine by many planners of military operations. In my experience, all too often planners use doctrine as the justification to get a plan approved by the CINC or JTF commander without ensuring that the doctrine they are applying is still valid or germane to the operation.

Doctrine is evolutionary. I believe that our doctrine for rear area operations needs improvement, of particular concern is the issue of force protection. Additionally, the question, "should the officer overseeing the rear area be a commander or coordinator?" requires a doctrinal answer.

Rear area operations can be divided into two primary functions, supporting the force and protecting the force.<sup>3</sup> This exposition focuses primarily on the perceived inability of current doctrine to support requirements of rear area operations specifically, produce the conditions necessary for adequate force protection levels.<sup>4</sup> The two

strongest illustrations for this perception come from the Downing Assessment<sup>5</sup> and the Secretary of Defense "Report to the President on the Protection of U.S. Forces Deployed Abroad."<sup>6</sup> The Downing Assessment is a report by retired General Wayne Downing to the Secretary of Defense on the Khobar Towers bombing, with recommendations for improvement of force protection policies. The Secretary of Defense report endorses the Downing Assessment and directs changes in force protection policies.

This paper will examine joint and service rear area doctrine to determine if it provides a satisfactory solution to future challenges. It will introduce alternatives to the current procedures in order to provide the joint force commander the operational control he needs to not only to protect the force but also to better manage and synchronize his warfighting efforts at the operational level. Critical questions include: does componency help or hinder the JRAC (joint rear area coordinator), should the JRAC be a coordinator or a commander, should air and sea space be included in the JRAC's scope of responsibilities, and should the JRAC come from JFC's (joint force commander) headquarters or can he come from the component commander's staff?

***Do not build fortresses to protect yourself - isolation is dangerous. The world is dangerous and enemies are everywhere - everyone has to protect themselves. A fortress seems the safest. But isolation exposes you to more dangers than it protects you from-it cuts you off from valuable information, it makes you conspicuous and an easy target.***

***Better to circulate among people, find allies, mingle.***

***You are shielded from your enemies by the crowd.***

Law 18<sup>7</sup>

The attack on U.S. forces at Khobar Towers dramatically underscores the applicability of Law 18 to joint rear area operations. The threat to our rear area operations is very real and it is expanding. In today's asymmetrical security environment a single terrorist attack in the rear area could produce a severe operational or even strategic disaster.

Striking a balance between establishing a fortress defense and mingling with the crowd is one of the major challenges pertaining to rear area operations that the joint force commander must overcome. No matter the intensity of the conflict, all out war or disaster relief, what transpires in the rear area can decisively impact the outcome of the operation.

### **Componency**

The 1986 Goldwater-Nichols Defense Reorganization Act created a new paradigm for joint operations requiring a transition from exclusively single service operations to

multit-service (joint) and even coalition (combined) operations under a joint force commander<sup>8</sup>. Traditionally, prior to 1986, rear area operations were strictly a service or component responsibility. That tradition has not changed with Goldwater - Nichols. Conversely, now force protection is the responsibility of the regional CINC. In most cases delegated to the CJTF (Commander of the Joint Task Force).<sup>9</sup> The problem now is that service commanders, exercising their rear area operations responsibilities, in the same location often prescribe different threat condition levels. It is not uncommon to go to a joint base see and Marines armed with personal weapons, helmets, and flackjackets and restricted to base liberty. While the Air Force personal are taking no additional security precautions and the Army personal are at some level in between. These different threat condition levels often cause moral and security problems. Additionally, they place the joint force in jeopardy by sending mixed singles to would be adversaries.

During the Gulf War each service component was responsible for managing their own rear areas replete with redundant logistic, communication and transportation nodes. As a result many functions that occur in the rear often were uncoordinated above the single service level adversely

effecting the joint commanders ability to synchronize the operational aspects of the campaign.

Service componency provides the JFC with a single service point of contact to represent the needs and interest of a particular service. Unfortunately, service componency constrains the commanders ability to control the entire battlefield and in particular the rear area. The JFC is constrained because he must permit the service component the flexibility to execute service responsibilities, i.e., administrative and logistic functions.<sup>10</sup>

Joint Doctrine calls for the JFC to appoint a JRAC.<sup>11</sup> However, all too frequently the JRAC is responsible in name only. He often lacks access to the joint force staff and additionally, he seldom has operational control of the forces required in executing the force protection portion of Rear Area Operations. For example, the TFC (tactical combat force) that responds to a level III threat in the rear area is normally under the operational control of the service or land component commander not the JRAC.<sup>12</sup> Another example of the lack of control is the previously noted one on the disparity between components in the establishment of threat conditions for similar locations.

Joint Publications 3-10, *Joint Doctrine for Rear Area Operations* and 3-10.1 *Joint Tactics, Techniques, and*

*Procedures for Base Defense* provide a good point of departure for meeting the rear area challenge but, as recent operations and even training exercises demonstrate, we have a long way to go in order to truly synchronize rear area operations in the joint environment.

The Secretary of Defense *"Report to the President on the Protection of U.S. Forces Deployed Abroad"* raises significant questions about our current method of mission planning regarding rear area operations. Currently, force protection is addressed during mission analysis, normally considered to be an implied task. The Secretary's report would require a fundamental change in the methodology we use for operational level planning. Force protection requirements would be competed against mission requirements instead of being part of the mission.<sup>13</sup> Another major finding of the report was that the service component commander exercised control at the operational level, i.e., administrative, logistical, and force protection authority over his forces in the theater, while tactical control was exercised by CJTF-SWA.<sup>14</sup> The result was that a common headquarters did not exercise force protection responsibilities and tactical control. Khobar Towers is a prime example of the unintended conflict between the service component commander and the joint force commander

caused by deficiencies in our joint doctrine for rear area operations. The most obvious answer to this problem is that the JFC must have operational as well as tactical command. This can be accomplished by making the JRAC a commander instead of a coordinator. The JRAC then takes on the role of a functional component commander. Figure 1 shows the command relationships of a JTF with the JRAC as a functional commander.

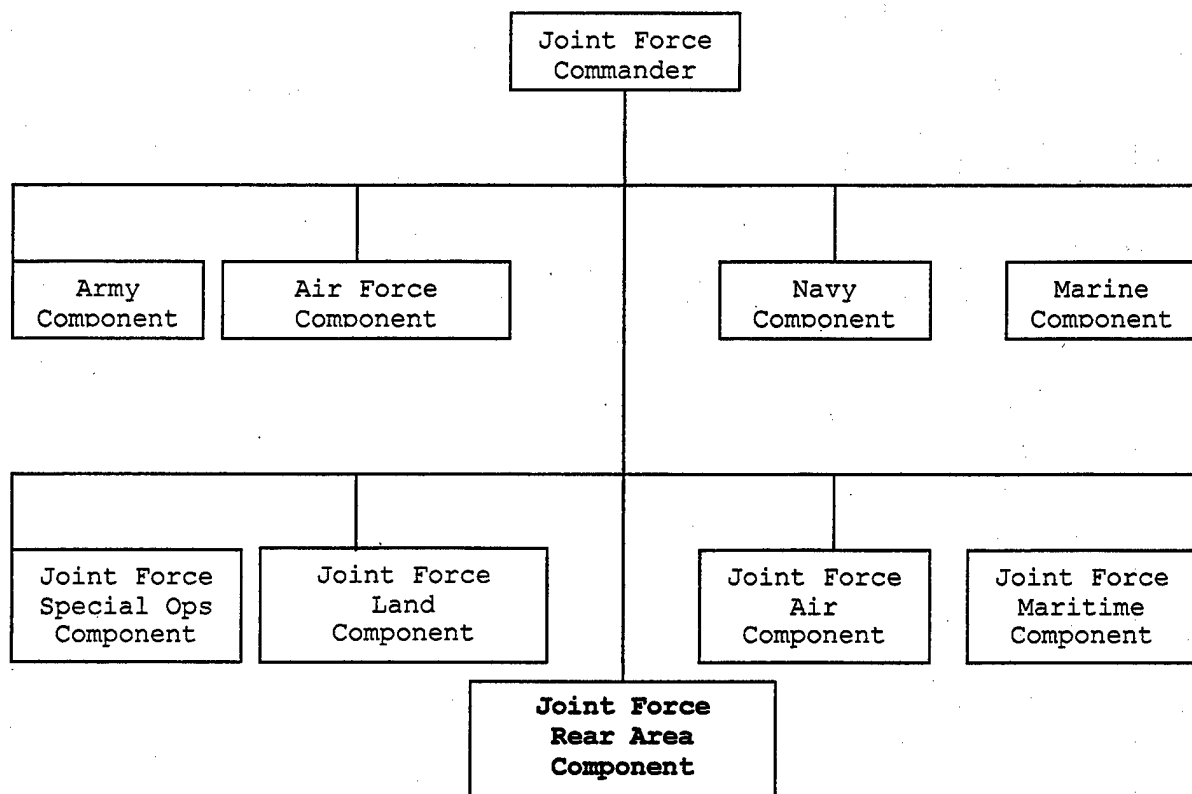


Figure 1.

JTF Organized by Functional Components.<sup>15</sup>

However, if the JRAC is a commander, then it becomes an imperative that the role of the service component commander is clearly defined. The following is from Joint Publication 1:

"The role of the component commander in a joint force merits special attention. Component commanders are first expected to orchestrate the activity of their own forces, branches and warfare communities...In addition, (they must) understand how their own pieces fit into the overall design and best support the joint force commander's plans and goals."<sup>16</sup>

A liberal interpretation of the above definition clearly indicates the correct role of the service component commander in the joint rear area should in fact be that of a coordinator. The critical point to remember is that service component is the sustainer and provider, the JFC is the operational and tactical warfighter, and in the rear area the warfighting, to include force protection, should be executed by the JRAC, under the title of a functional component commander.

Functional competency has a proven track record. The continuous joint service argument over control of air operations was successfully resolved by the establishment of the JFACC (joint force air component commander).

### **Rear Area Operations Overview**

Where is the rear area and what dose it look like?

General of the Army William Sherman offered the following description:

"I never saw the rear of an army engaged in battle but (when observing troops in the rear) I feared that some calamity had happened at the front-the apparent confusion, broken wagons, crippled horses, men lying about dead and maimed, parties hastening to and fro in seeming disorder, and a general apprehension of something dreadful about to ensure; all these signs, however lessened as I neared the front, and there the contrast was complete - perfect order, men and horses full of confidence, and it was not unusual for general hilarity, laughing, and cheering, Although cannon might be firing, the musketry clattering, and the enemy's shot hitting close, there reigned a general feeling of strength and security that bore a marked contrast to the bloody signs that had drifted rapidly to the rear; therefore, for comfort and safety, I surely would rather be at the front than the rear line of battle."<sup>17</sup>

General Sherman's somewhat cynical description of the rear area is indeed in sharp contrast to U.S. doctrine's intended design and the prescribed functions of the rear area operations in the modern era of joint and coalition warfare.

Operations in the joint rear area frequently cross over the missions and capabilities of the various service components. These essential service and sustainment functions cover eight broad areas: host-nation support, security, communications, intelligence, sustainment, area management, movements, and infrastructure development.

These eight missions have two overarching objectives. The first is to protect the force against enemy actions and the second is to ensure the force maintains full combat capabilities.<sup>18</sup> In today's joint and coalition environment no one service or joint force headquarters has the personnel or resources to independently fulfill this monumental requirement.

The current doctrinal solution to the protection and sustainment challenge is the formation of the Rear Area Operations Center (RAOC). The operations of the RAOC are directed by the JRAC. Currently the only CINC with a standing JRAC and RAOC is USCENTCOM.<sup>19</sup>

#### **Organization of the Joint Rear Area**

According to Joint Publication 1-02 the joint rear area is: "A specific land area within a joint force commander's area of operations designated to facilitate protection and operation of installations and forces supporting the joint force."<sup>20</sup> The joint rear area is normally established by the JFC based on the threat, the size of the area of operations, logistical requirements and magnitude of the operation. Under the current doctrine, the joint rear area does not include the airspace or sea area to include ports and harbors.<sup>21</sup>

Airspace is not included because it is combat space and therefore the concern of the JFACC. The problem with this arrangement is that in today's threat environment the JRAC faces a very challenging threat from air attacks in the configuration of airborne, helicopter, and missile attacks. Without control of the airspace and the air defense assets the JRAC is required to defer defense against air attacks to the AADC (area air defense commander). In order to make this problem more manageable, USCINCCENT has directed that the JRAC and the JFACC be co-located.<sup>22</sup> Note: The AADC works for the JFACC. Under this arrangement, command and control challenges are significantly reduced and unity of effort is fostered.

A similar philosophy applies to the sea/amphibious lanes. The Naval component commander is assigned the sea area because it is his close combat area. The Navy's "Forward From the Sea" and the Marine Corps' "Ship to Objective Maneuver" (STOM) doctrine, validate the requirement for the naval component to own the sea area.

The disconnect however, is the ownership of ports and harbors. In today's joint environment deployment, sustainment, maintenance and retrograde of the force will be accomplished primarily through the use of fast sealift and maritime preposition force (MPF) assets. These assets

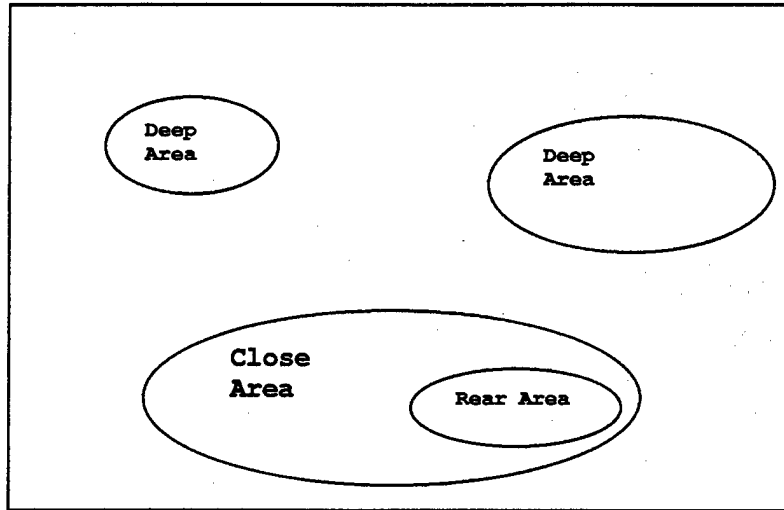
support all services and even coalition partners. Therefore in a benign environment (forced entry not required) the JRAC is in a much better position to manage and protect this critical transportation node.

The traditional arrangement of the linear battle space, figure 2, places the rear area directly behind the component rear area. Figure 3 depicts an example of the rear area configuration in an operation that is comprised of noncontiguous battle space.

Joint Deep Area	
Component Deep Area	Component Deep Area
Component Close Area	Component Close Area
Component Rear Area	Component Rear Area
Joint Rear Area	

Figure 2.

Contiguous battle space<sup>23</sup>



**Figure 3.**

**Noncontiguous battle space<sup>24</sup>**

The current arrangement of the battlespace in the Korean Theater of Operations provides an example of linear organization of the rear area in contiguous battlespace. The organization of forces for Operation Northern Watch better represents noncontiguous battlespace.

From these figures one can rapidly identify geographic areas of responsibility. The problem is that both methods of dividing the battlespace utilize a cookie-cutter methodology based on componency requirements, which can easily be defeated by an asymmetrical attack due to a lack of synchronized battle management.

Additionally, figure two is misleading. From a cursory glance the reader receives the impression that the joint

rear area is relatively unoccupied. The truth is that this area is littered with base clusters, transportation and communication nodes. The JFC owns the land and through the JRAC even coordinates the activities, but in reality the control of land is shared by the components through their area and base cluster commanders.

Making the JRAC the commander vice the coordinator could eliminate this conflict. Base commanders would continue to provide support to their component though, under the operational/tactical control of the JRAC.

One could argue this type of arrangement would reduce the effectiveness of the service component by denying him control of his own forces. In reality this arrangement provides the JFC with more centralized control and still provides the component commander the authority for decentralized execution of the prescribed mission.

### **Enemy Threat**

History is replete with examples of how adversaries attacked their opponent's rear areas to achieve an operational and in some cases even strategic advantage. Joint doctrine categorizes the threat to rear area operations into three levels as depicted in figure 4.

Threat Level	Possible Threat	Response Force
Level I	Agents, Sympathizers, Terrorist, Saboteurs	Unit, base and base cluster self-defense
Level II	Small tactical units, unconventional forces, guerrillas	Self-defense measures with response force(s) and supporting arms
Level III	Large tactical units Airborne/helicopter /amphibious	Tactical combat force

**Figure 4.**

#### **Threat levels and response forces<sup>25</sup>**

Attacks in the rear area of operations by Level I, II, or III threats are all capable of accomplishing a decisive victory at every level of conflict i.e., full-scale world war or MOOTW (military operations other than war).

The October 1983 terrorist attack against the Marine compound in Beirut, Lebanon demonstrates how successful a Level I attack can be in MOOTW. In the wake of 298 dead, the attack shook the operational and strategic resolve of the United States.<sup>26</sup> Additionally, this attack demonstrated that there was a disconnect between the service component and their Title 10 responsibility and the headquarters exercising operational and tactical command in the area of force protection. The Long Commission investigating the attack found that force protection issues were exacerbated by a complex, awkward chain of command.<sup>27</sup>

Our current doctrine directs that local units, bases or base clusters, respond to Level I attacks.<sup>28</sup> Unfortunately, as demonstrated by Khobar towers, this type of linear response does not work against the asymmetrical threat that we face today. Until recently these asymmetric threat to our rear area have had little play in our regional war games therefore, our doctrine has stagnated in a linear battlefield. USCINCENT draft OPORD 99-01 is a tremendous step forward. CENTCOM's plan takes Level I base defense, ties it directly to the JRAC, and bridges the transition gap between peacetime and war.<sup>29</sup> Additionally, it prescribes clear-cut procedures, derived from Joint Pubs 3-10 and 3-10.1, utilizing the JRAC as the focal point to provide the unity of effort and coordination that will enable success.<sup>30</sup>

The Level II attacks of French and Greek resistance fighters during World War II were occasionally successful at the tactical level; operationally they were only gnat stings. However, strategically the Germans knew they could never defeat the movement. The Germans only recourse was to wage a dedicated campaign against the resistance in order to protect their command and control and rear area operations.<sup>31</sup> In actuality the Germans modified their command relationships and operational tactics for the

enhancement of force protection under increasing threat conditions.

The question before us today is, Can military police, local interior guard, and indirect fire weapons defeat an unconventional force attacking our rear operations? The problem, as I see it, is that the threat that Level II is designed to meet is a conventional threat. Our doctrine must be expanded to include Level II asymmetrical threats. During the Battle of the Bulge the Germans infiltrated company size units disguised as American Soldiers to disrupt the American logistic and command and control system. Due to the rapid collapse of the American lines their efforts were inconsequential.<sup>32</sup> However, if the American lines would have held, could a hand full of military policemen have coped with such a threat?

Based on the German Army's actions against the Greek and French guerrillas, which is similar to our doctrine for a Level II response, the answer to the above question is, We might be able to hold our own for a while. In today's unconventional and asymmetrical world where causalities are a center of gravity, holding your own equal's defeat.<sup>33</sup>

The amphibious landing at Inchon provides a superior example of a Level III threat skillfully executed against the heart of North Korea's rear area.<sup>34</sup> Currently our joint

doctrine directs that the JRAC would respond to an attack such as the one at Inchon with a TCF (Tactical Combat Force).<sup>35</sup> The TCF can range in size from an armor battalion to a Marine Expeditionary Force. The TCF is designated by the JFC and can work directly for the JFC or through the JRAC or a component commander.<sup>36</sup> The long pole in the tent is that base and base cluster defense must be integrated and sufficiently strong to maintain sustainment and force protection until the TCF can be deployed to defeat the threat.<sup>37</sup>

The key to success in all three-threat conditions, particularly in a MOOTW environment, is intelligence and early warning. A critical finding in the report to the President on the Protection of U.S. Forces Deployed Abroad, was that we need to improve our use of available intelligence, and we need to standardize threat conditions between the interagency i.e., Department of State, CIA, FBI, and the CINCs and service components.<sup>38</sup>

### **Conclusion**

The U.S. Army largely produced the joint doctrine for rear area operations and base defense contained in Joint Publications 3-10 and the 3-10.1 with some limited input from the Marine Corps. The Air Force and Navy are onboard

with the doctrine to the limited degree that it impacts on their operations. The bottom line is that the current doctrine is workable but it has some flaws that need to be adjusted.

The JRAC needs to be a functional component commander not a coordinator. One could argue that all the JRAC need do is go to the JFC and resolve the problem. That is true, but in today's asymmetric environment time is critical and decisions need to be made at the lowest level possible, the JRAC.

For the JFACC component commander is a fundamental precept that enables the execution of his responsibilities. Functional component commander would provide the JRAC similar benefits. A component commander is capable of acting/providing the JRAC. However, one finds it difficult to serve two masters. CINCCENT's solution establishing a standing JRAC as a part of his staff offers the best resolution.

There are eight functions of rear operations. The concept of force protection is currently buried under the security function. One thing that the Downing Assessment makes crystal clear is that our joint doctrine should be revised, elevating force protection to a functional position in its own right.

Our rear area doctrine is working. However, we need to continue to refine and improve and most importantly understand it. The suggestions offered here are easy fixes and represent the tip of the spear. If we fail to make changes General Sherman's vision of the rear area may once again be reality.

<sup>1</sup> Douglas Lovelace Jr., and Thomas-Durell Young, "Joint Doctrine Development Overcoming A Legacy," Joint Forces Quarterly, winter 1996-1997, 94.

<sup>2</sup> Alan Beyerchen, "Clausewitz, Nonlinearity and the Unpredictability of War," International Security, 17:3 (winter, 1992), pp. 59-90. © Copyright 1993 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

<sup>3</sup> MCWP 3-41.1 Headquarters United States Marine Corps (Washington, D. C. January 29, 1999), 1-2.

<sup>4</sup> General Wayne Downing, Report to the Secretary of Defense An Assessment Of The Khobar Towers Bombing, [http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/downing\\_rpt/prefuncl.html](http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/downing_rpt/prefuncl.html).

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> William J. Perry, Secretary of Defense, Report to the President the Protection of U.S. Forces Deployed Abroad (Washington D. C.: September 15, 1996).

<sup>7</sup> Joost Elffers and Robert Greene, The 48 Laws of Power, (New York, New York, Penguin Putnam Inc., 1998) 130.

<sup>8</sup> United States Marine Corps. Marine Corps Warfighting Pub 0-1.1 Componency. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 5 June 1998, 5. <http://www.doctrine.quantico.usmc.mil/0-1/template.htm>.

<sup>9</sup> William J. Perry, Secretary of Defense, Report to the President the Protection of U.S. Forces Deployed Abroad. (Washington D. C.: September 15, 1996) 9.

<sup>10</sup> Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Doctrine Encyclopedia. (Washington, D. C.: July 16, 1997), 391.

<sup>11</sup> Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication 3-10 Joint Doctrine for Rear Area Operations. (Washington, D. C.: May 28, 1996), vii.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. IV-2.

<sup>13</sup> William J. Perry, Secretary O Defense, Report to the President the Protection of U.S. Forces Deployed Abroad. (Washington D. C.: September 15, 1996) 8.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid. 8.

<sup>15</sup> United States Marine Corps. Marine Corps Warfighting Pub 0-1.1 Componency. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 5 June 1998, 17. <http://www.doctrine.quantico.usmc.mil/0-1/template.htm>.

<sup>16</sup> Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication 1 Joint Warfare of the Armed Forces of the United States (Washington, D. C.: January 10, 1995), III-10.

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- <sup>17</sup> Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Doctrine Encyclopedia (Washington, D. C.: July 16, 1997), 418.
- <sup>18</sup> Ibid. 418
- <sup>19</sup> Phone conversation with LtCol Scott Duke USCENTCOM JRAC REAR.
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid. 417
- <sup>21</sup> Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication 3-10 (Washington, D. C.: May 28, 1996), I-1-I-2.
- <sup>22</sup> Conversation with Gen. Zinni 6 Apr 99.
- <sup>23</sup> MCWP 3-41.1 Headquarters United States Marine Corps (Washington, D. C. January 29, 1999), 1-8.
- <sup>24</sup> Ibid. 1-8.
- <sup>25</sup> Ibid. 4-7.
- <sup>26</sup> US Multinational Force (USMNF) Lebanon 27 June 1998, 2.  
<http://www.fas.org/man/dod-101/ops/usmnf.htm>.
- <sup>27</sup> William J. Perry, Secretary O Defense, Report to the President the Protection of U.S. Forces Deployed Abroad (Washington D. C.: September 15, 1996), 8.
- <sup>28</sup> Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication 3-10.1 Joint Tactics Techniques and Procedures for Base Defense (Washington, D. C.: July 23, 1996), I-5.
- <sup>29</sup> Annex J to USCINCENT OPORD 99-01 Force Protection (draft) 24 Mar 99.
- <sup>30</sup> Ibid. 7.
- <sup>31</sup> John M. Lord, Greece World War II, A Study of Rear Area Security Measures, (Washington D. C.: Jul 1965), 26.
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- <sup>37</sup> Ibid. II-8.

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